Life, Liberty and Law

Harri Marcha

Each generation is faced with the spectre of its own potential greatness. We are no exception. Our technological achievements are vast. Our potential power is awesome. But there is scant evidence of moral discipline in any area of life in our time. We seem to be content with amoral formulas of self-profit and convenience. We seem anxious to allow the perversion of our power. And power without discipline is chaos. It is madness.

agree that medical science and law must reach a definition of the exact point of human death. Their combined efforts must dovetail into Justice. The Notre Dame Lawyer, a publication of that university, discourses in the June 1973 issue with reference to a specific Kansas statute: "Death occurs when there is an absence of spontaneous respiratory and cardiac function, and attempts at resuscitation are considered hopeless or when there is an absence of spontaneous brain absence of spontaneous brain function, and it appears that further supportive maintenance will be usless." They state also: "The absence of functional brain activity (or brain death) is determined by an isoelectric (flat wave) pattern on an electro-encephalograph over a continued period of time; then death is pronounced and artificial means of support may be discontinued without fear of liability." Brain function here refers to the brain control of those body systems which sustain life. It does not refer to the control of thought, or to the ability to form human relationships

If we thus define a human death, we have thus defined the end of a human life. Until that point has been reached however, a man is still living; and until that moment the physician and legal counsel, on behalf of humanity, are bound to do all within their power to comfort and protect, to alleviate pain, and to console the dying patient. As long as the least spark of life flickers, it is criminal to deliberately extinguish it. At the same time, we need not prolong lives which by sound medical judgement are purely vegetal with no signs of human physiological response, by the employment of artificial machines when there is no reasonable hope of benefit. But here I speak of terminal patients who because of disease, accident or other trauma, have reached their final moments.

The deformed, the retarded, the dependent and the lonely, or the victims of despair and misfortune are very much alive. Those babies conceived within the alcohol- or drug-addicted mother or the sexually active teenager, as well as those con-ceived though determined by amniocentesis to be possibly

AGENCY SEEKS HOUSEHOLD GOODS

A Summer drop-off in donated furniture and applicances has prompted the Monroe County Department of Social Services to appeal to the general public. Director James Reed said the department depends entirely on donations to meet the hundreds of requests it receives each year for such things as refrigerators, gas ranges, and household furnishings, especially bedroom furniture. Pick-up and delivery are arranged by the Home Economics Department, 442-

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defective and those conceived although unwanted all are alive. The mongoloid child or the youngster with cystic fibrosis is alive. The famous and the unknown who give repeated written consent to their own assisted suicides, often labeling them in classic euphony as diving wills' or death with dignity statements, are very much alive. And intentionally inflicting death upon any or all of these is an act of despair, an act of evil.

Evil, as Eric Fromm has written, "is man's loss of himself in his tragic affempt to escape the burden of his humanity." Power is one of man's burdens and greatness is another. It is within our power to bring a deliberate death to all ... singularly or en masse, before birth or after. We must act with caution and wisdom and discipline For life is not a toy — it is not a reward to be given and taken by the flawless and the wealthy at the whim of society. It is a precious commodity, a delicate truth.

Shall we allow natural death come to those for whom we have done all that is within our knowledge and power and love, after we have surrounded them with human understanding and compassion and shall we end our death control there? Or shall we repeat our hideous errors with respect to slavery and abortion, and indiscriminately give the evil and sterile death to those who are, in fact or in fancy, an emotional and economic burden to our preferred life styles, costly to our affluent society, unproductive, unwanted and inconvenient...

We are indeed confronted with the spectre of our own potential. And I would hope that we learn to share human life and refuse to twist, abort, manipulate and

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Hornell

TABERNACLE

Wayland — St. Joseph's new one destroyed last November was blessed at the 5:15 Mass, July 27.

PILGRIMAGE

Hornell - The next Holy Year Pilgrimage to be held at St. Ann's is slated for Sept. 29. The parish will also go as a group to Mount Savior Monastery near Corning on Sept. 22.

RIGHT TO LIFE

Hornell — St. Ann's Right to Life "Committee meets every second Wednesday at 8 p.m. in the school: All are welcome.

PARISH COUNCIL

Dansville — At a recent Parish Council meeting at St. Mary's, the following were elected: Rose Hayes, pres.; Richard Wirth, vice pres.; Christian Sauerbier, sec. New members on the council are Ed Acomb, John Hammond, Tony Caito and Richard Wirth.

PICNIC

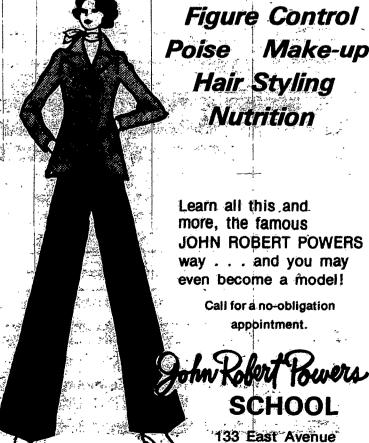
Addison — The Addison Council of Churches will sponsor a Community Picnic from 1 to 5 p.m. Aug. 25 at Firemen's Field.

PICNIC SUPPER

Addison — Msgr. John Duffy asks the ladies of the parish, St. Catherine's, to reserve places for Catherine's, to reserve places for a picnic supper meeting for the Lord's 'Housekeepers on Wednesday, Aug. 21, at 6:30 p.m. This meeting, the first of its kind in two years will give all an opportunity to exchange notes and ideas on the matter of the weekly cleaning of the parish church cleaning of the parish church.

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PARISH COUNCIL

Newark — St. Michael's recently held elections for the 1974-75 term of the Parish Council. Re-elected were John Bailey, chairman, Mrs. Bernard Celso, svicechairman; Petrina Houseçamp, chairman

Named as cochairmen of standing committees for the year are: Mrs. Steve Pitrella, Cladys Talbo, Hugo Lucianovic, senior members, Ken George, family life; John Palermo, Fred Burgess, finance; Tom Shear, parish building and grounds; Sister Joyce McGinn, Mrs. Robert Fanning, education; DeVries, youth; Mrs. Joseph Bramante, Edward Doane, liturgy; Bernard Celso, Mrs. Frederico Joseph Colon, human development; Morris Tailli, Pre-Holy Year and Holy Year Representative.

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